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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BUDAPEST 000362

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [EU](#) [HU](#)
SUBJECT: JOBBIK AND RISING HUNGARIAN NATIONALISM

REF: BUDAPEST 00086 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting P/E Counselor Jon Martinsonm, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (SBU) Summary. As the European Parliamentary (EP) elections approach on June 7, many Hungarian political analysts and pollsters believe that the extreme-right Jobbik party will win at least one seat in the EP, providing it a potential "bounce" for the national elections currently scheduled for 2010. The party promises a "new Hungary" built on a strong foundation of nationalism that plays a key role in Jobbik's ideology. Jobbik's growing appeal warrants a look at its political agenda, both internally and externally. End summary.

12. (SBU) Established by students at the Eotvos Lorand Science University in 1999, Jobbik ("for a better Hungary") has significantly increased its public profile since the 2006 national elections. Citing politically corrupt parliamentarians, multinational companies, and "gypsy crime" as the reason for Hungary's problems, Party President Gabor Vona calls for the establishment of a values-oriented "new Hungary," a Hungary that "belongs to the Hungarians." With 257 local party chapters around the country, Jobbik often calls upon the Party-created Magyar Garda to provide publicity and media attention for the Party's agenda, with considerable success. Party leaders cite positive results in recent local elections (Note. Placing third in two local district bi-elections, ahead of the parliamentary Free Democrats and Hungarian Democratic Forum parties. End note.) and their popular candidate, former Fulbright Scholar Krisztina Morvai, as reasons for hope in the upcoming EP election (Reftel).

NATIONALISM AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

13. (SBU) During a recent "on-line" interview with a British reporter, Zsolt Varkonyi, a member of Jobbik's Foreign Affairs Committee, provided further insight into the Party's anti-EU, anti-globalization, anti-U.S. posture. Varkonyi began the interview by taking issue with the reporter's comments connecting Jobbik with nationalism, commenting that "the word nationalism carries a stigma in Western Europe...it is not a politically correct term to use, as you probably know. While we disagree with this judgment, we would rather have ourselves referred to as 'patriots.'"

14. (SBU) Continuing, Varkonyi expressed optimism over the upcoming EP elections, commenting that we all know that sentiment and action do not always go hand in hand. Commenting that windows of opportunity constantly open up, just as they have for the last 20 years, we blame the Hungarian political elite for being unable to seize these opportunities - too many to list - for the benefit of the

nation. Many voters feel they have been let down, for years, by the current political parties. Accordingly, some 50 percent of voters do not even intend to vote in the upcoming European Parliamentary elections. Despite - or just because of - that, we don't think it would be unrealistic for Jobbik to come in at close to 10 percent. (Comment. Parties must garner at least five percent of the total number of voters on election day in order to send a representative to the EP. With projections for voter turnout currently below forty percent, many political analysts believe that this would benefit Jobbik, in particular if they successfully marshal their supporters to vote on June 7. End comment.)

15. (SBU) Expressing the view that Jobbik represents what over 90 percent of the population believes, Varkonyi cited the Iraq war as a case in point, stating that 92 percent of the population opposed Hungarian force deployments. He said that despite this overwhelming public opposition, all five Parliamentary parties voted in favor of sending troops to both Iraq and Afghanistan. The same is true for the Russian-Georgian conflict, where we, Jobbik, held President Saakashvili responsible for the escalation of the crisis last August - in line with what the majority of Hungarians believed. (Comment. Contrary to Varkonyi's comments concerning public support, recent Hungarian polls indicate approximately 60 percent positive support for Hungarian participation in Afghanistan, even following the deaths last year of two bomb-disposal soldiers. End comment.)

SLOVAKIA - WELL, IT IS REALLY HUNGARY

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16. (SBU) On relations with Slovakia, Varkonyi noted that we always have to keep in mind that an independent Slovakia has only existed since January 15, 1993. Prior to the First World War, no such country existed; it became a part of Czechoslovakia after WWII, but for more than 1000 years the territory was called Hungary. Varkonyi said he consciously avoided saying it was part of Hungary, because this would be misleading. Slovakia and Hungary were the same country and there were no legal, ethnic or administrative internal divisions within the regions that form Slovakia and Hungary. The only exception, he noted, was when Hungary was under foreign - Turkish or Hapsburg, or both - occupation. Drawing attention to the Slovak coat-of-arms, Varkonyi noted that the Slovak government chose to feature half of the 1000 year old Hungarian coat-of-arms in their own, thus acknowledging their Hungarian Kingdom roots.

TRIANON - A LIVING WOUND

16. (SBU) Varkonyi's comments concerning Slovakia reflect Jobbik's pre-occupation with the dismantling of "greater Hungary" following the treaty of Trianon in 1920. Calling the Treaty of Trianon "a living wound in the body of the Hungarian nation," Varkonyi said the maxim set forth by the then American president Woodrow Wilson, that all nations have the right to self-determination, is valid for both Slovak and Hungarian nationals, regardless of whether they live in Slovakia or in Hungary. Therefore, if the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, which constitutes a majority along the present Hungarian/Slovak border, decides to live in a political entity of their own choosing, all civilized nations of Europe - and the rest of the World - have to respect that decision, just as in the case of Kosovo's independence. That choice has to be offered to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, concluding that "perhaps we'll have a common state again in the future."

17. (SBU) Assessing the potential for cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary, Varkonyi said that after living

side-by-side as neighbors for a thousand years, it is virtually impossible to physically distinguish between the Hungarian and the Slovak people, sharing a common cultural roots that bind us together. Therefore, there is no other option for these two nations than to live and work - and prosper - together. We both have to push aside those politicians who make a living out of inciting hatred between us. That said, Varkonyi noted that Jobbik has openly criticized the present hostile attitude against the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, stating that both sides must make it clear that the ball is now in the Slovak court.

THE EU - NICE IDEA, BUT NOT FOR HUNGARY

¶8. (SBU) Noting Hungary's 43 years under a communist-socialist regime, Varkonyi said "we used to joke that communism is a nice idea when described on a piece of paper, but we are very sorry for the way it turned out in reality. The same goes for the European Union." What we have experienced since our accession in 2004 is definitely very negative in all respects: for the Hungarian economy, for our cultural heritage, and for our demographic processes. Basically, an overwhelming share of our economy, banking, and trade are in foreign hands, and therefore more and more young people leave the country in order to work abroad.

¶9. (SBU) Referring to "The Grand Chess Board" written by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Varkonyi touched on the development of the Common Market and subsequently the European Union as an effort by the German and French political and economical elite to avoid another tragic war. Commenting that the structure has served the interests of the people in the original six, then 12, then 15 states very well, the European Union does not serve the interests of the rest of Europe, as we have come to see. Stating that the EU structure is artificial, Varkonyi suggested that a collection of free and independent, small nation-states would best characterize the very idea of Europe, since no artificial political structure can work where there are some 15 official languages. Reflecting on what the common currency has done to the economies of some member states, such as Italy, Portugal, Ireland or Greece, Varkonyi stated that "what works for Berlin and Paris will not always work elsewhere."

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¶10. (C) Comment. Varkonyi's interview is the most detailed statement of Jobbik's policy stance, foreign or domestic, we have heard to date. Jobbik's leadership is working hard to legitimize the party for the upcoming EU elections, with street-corner information stands and campaign posters competing for the attention of the populace along side the more traditional Socialist, Fidesz, Free Democrat, and Hungarian Democratic Forum parties. Jobbik President Gabor Vona and the party's number one candidate for the EP elections, Krisztina Morvai, are the only two party members with a public face, but they rarely appear together in public. This may reflect divergent views on some key issues. For example, Vona supports reinstatement of capital punishment, while Morvai spoke in opposition at a party rally on March 15. Vona is the engine that drives Jobbik's and Magyar Garda's "gypsy crime" agenda, while Morvai speaks in general terms about "we" and "them", viewed by many as coded anti-Semitic language.

¶11. (C) Comment continued. The upcoming EP elections may well be a strong indicator of the future of several political parties in Hungary. With the Fidesz candidate defeating current Speaker of Parliament Katalin Szili in the May 10 mayoral election in the southern Hungarian town of Pecs, capturing almost 65 percent of the vote, Fidesz could capture at least 16 of the allocated 22 seats in the European Parliament. The two smallest parliamentary parties, the Free Democrats (SZDSZ) and Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) may

well be on the ropes. Our assessment of the elections will
come via septel. End comment.

Levine